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# EPA to raze Buxton mill

## Decision ends town dilemma

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BUXTON— Rogers Fibre Mill may finally be torn down — safely.

The Environmental Protection Agency announced a \$960,000 commitment today to demolish the abandoned structure, which sits along the Saco River near the Bar Mills bridge.

Dave Lackey, a representative from Sen. Olympia Snowe's office, pointed out that the EPA money is not a grant that leaves responsibility for demolition with the town. Rather, the EPA is committing itself to coordinating the entire project.

Lackey said the EPA will work with state and local safety officials on the demolition, and will probably hire local contractors to do most of the work.

"I think it's important that they're doing it," Lackey said of the EPA, "because they recognize the immediacy of the problem."

The town has twice voted against foreclosing on the property; Massachusetts developer and mill owner Patrick Canonica is two years behind in taxes on the site.

Selectman Bob Brandenstein has explained that residents feared the cost of razing the structure would fall upon the town if it assumed ownership of the mill.

Abandoned for nearly 20 years now, the mill produced fiberboard from 1917 until 1980. It has since become a hazard to the environment and to the public. Walls have begun to cave in during the past several months, and the building houses a variety of unknown and potentially hazardous materials.

Lackey noted that graffiti has been observed inside on the third floor of the mill, which means people could be putting themselves in danger by breaking into the place.

"It's just not a secure area that's fenced off and will never hurt anyone," he said.

The EPA has conducted a preliminary assessment of the site and will be coordinating with state and local officials in the near future to establish a detailed plan for the project.

Completion of the project will include asbestos removal and demolition of the building, as well as identification and disposal of hazardous material located in drums and tanks on the property.

The town had been pursuing \$260,000 in community block grant money to tear the mill down before the EPA announced its commitment to the project.